

# Perspective on Health Hazards

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## Perspective

All chemicals we use can potentially cause harm to our health so it's very important that we understand what that hazards are and how to prevent exposure. There are four main classes of health hazard namely corrosive, toxic, harmful and irritant. These are then sub-divided into different categories depending on the degree of danger and assigned specific hazard statements

- Corrosive material which may cause skin burns and permanent eye damage.
- Avoid contact with skin and eyes
- Do not breathe vapours or sprays
- Wear protective clothing
- Toxic material which may cause life threatening effects even in small amounts and with short exposure
- Do not swallow the material, allow it to come into contact with skin or breathe it
- May cause serious and prolonged health effects on short or long term exposure
- Do not swallow the material, allow it to come into contact with skin or breathe it
- May cause irritation (redness, rash) or less serious toxicity
- Keep away from skin and eyes
- Avoid expose to the environment

Occupational health hazards are those factors arising in or from the occupational environment that adversely impact health. Thus, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) came into being in 1970 and is responsible for administering the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

The goal of the Act is to ensure that employees do not suffer material

impairment of health or functional capacity due to a lifetime occupational exposure to chemicals. The statute imposes a duty on employers to provide employees with a safe workplace environment, free of known hazards that may cause death or serious bodily injury.

The Act is also responsible for the means by which chemicals are contained. Workplaces are inspected to ensure compliance and enforcement of applicable standards under the Act. In keeping with the nature of the Act, there is also a series of standard tests relating to occupational health and safety as well as the general recognition of health hazards in the workplace. The Act is also the means by which guidelines have evolved for the management and disposition of chemicals used in chemical laboratories.

This Act has some (but limited) jurisdiction of over-the-road vehicle operation. In the instance of spills occurring while the material is on the vehicle or otherwise in transportation, the Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) standard does not cover the operator per se but does, however, cover emergency response personnel who respond to the incident

- Mold and pests such as cockroaches, rodents, and dust mites can cause and contribute to asthma, allergies, and other respiratory illnesses. Since housing conditions can play a significant role in respiratory health, these hazards can greatly increase and intensify susceptibility to respiratory illnesses.
- Toxic materials such as lead, asbestos, and chemical pesticides can harm human health in a variety of ways. For instance, lead poisoning in children causes reduced IQ and attention span, hyperactivity, impaired growth, reading and learning disabilities, hearing loss, insomnia, and a range of other health, intellectual, and behavioral problems.
- Poisonous gases such as carbon monoxide and radon also pose threats to health. Carbon monoxide poisoning results in more than 200 accidental deaths annually and, at much lower levels, causes flu-like symptoms, which often go undiagnosed.
- Radon can increase the risk of cancer, which is the second leading cause of death among adults and children in the U.S.

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